BENCHMARKING ONE-STOP CENTERS

Understanding Keys to Success

A project partnership between:

The Workforce Board of Northern Cook County

The Chicago Workforce Board

Crossroads Workforce Investment Board

Central Illinois Workforce Development Board

Final Report
April, 2002

Made possible by a Technical Assistance grant from the Illinois Department of Employment Security, Job Training Division

Prepared by

Corporation for a Skilled Workforce
Ann Arbor, Michigan

In Partnership with

Leaders in Excellence
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Acknowledgements

This report would not have been possible without support and assistance from many sources. The authors extend their deepest appreciation to everyone listed, as well as to anyone inadvertently omitted.

- **The four sponsoring Workforce Boards, their directors and staffs:**
    - *The Workforce Board of Northern Cook County* – Chair James Miller, Vice President, Business Services Group, ARAMARK, Inc.; Board Committee Chair and incoming Chair Stephen Fallek, Vice President, Corporate Planning, Zurich North America Insurance Group; President Mary Pepperl; Director of Policy and Planning Fredia Walker.
    - *The Chicago Workforce Board* – Co-Chair Al Friedman, President, Friedman Properties; Co-Chair Julia Stasch, Vice-President John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; Service Delivery Integration Committee Co-Chair Noel Massie, District Manager, United Parcel Services; Executive Director Linda J. Kaiser; Associate Director Kristin Munsch; Associate Director George Lakehomer; One-Stop Transition Director Marta Cerda; Director of Youth Policy Arlene Ortiz-Cruz; Senior Policy Analyst Sam Smith; ETC Coordinator Pedro Gonzalez; Executive Assistant Dawn Kwitkowski.
    - *Crossroads Workforce Investment Board* – Chair Robert J. Dugan, Vice President, First National Bank of Vandalia; Vice Chair Jerry Michels, private consultant, former General Manager, Illinois Gas Company; Susan Flessner, Dean of Workforce Training, Lake Land College.
    - *Central Illinois Workforce Development Board* – Chair Sandy (Earl) Moldovan, Clark Engineers, Inc.; Bashir Ali, Director, City of Peoria Workforce Development Department; Hope Long, Management Analyst, City of Peoria Workforce Development Department; Paula Nachtrieb, Operations Manager, City of Peoria Workforce Development Department; Jennifer Brackney, Marketing and Business Services Manager, City of Peoria Workforce Development Department.
- **The Illinois Department of Employment Security, which provided both funding and guidance during this effort.** Many thanks to Gertrude W. Jordan, Director, Roderick Nunn, Executive Deputy Director, and Herbert Dennis, Manager, Job Training Division. Special thanks to Jan Etzkorn, Supervisor, Office of Technical Assistance for her support, enthusiasm and ideas throughout the project.
- **The Illinois Department of Human Services** for participating in the site visits and helping with the learning process.
- **The sites that were so gracious to give us their time and to help plan outstanding visits.** A full listing of the sites and their contact information appears in the report.
- **The tour groups.** All of the members of the Workforce Boards, their staffs, and state agencies who devoted considerable time to helping conduct this study.
- **The National Advisory Group** for its guidance during the design phase and for its feedback on this report. Members include Teri Bergman, AFL-CIO Working for America Institute; Neil Bomberg, National Association of Counties; Joan Crigger, U.S. Conference of Mayors; Phyllis Eisen, National Association of Manufacturers; Mary Gardner Clagett, National Center on Education and the Economy; Robert Knight, National Association of Workforce

Boards; Paul Mendez, National Association of Workforce Development Professionals; Martin Simon, National Governors' Association; William Tracy, John J. Heldrich Center; Tonda Williams, U.S. Chamber of Commerce; Byron Zuidema, U.S. Department of Labor.

- **The John J. Heldrich Center at Rutgers University** which was gracious in sharing its research for its study of best practices in one-stop centers released last year.
- **Corporation for a Skilled Workforce's study team, including** President Larry Good; Chief Operating Officer Jeannine La Prad; Senior Partners Pamela Anderson, Nina Babich, Roger Shackleford, and Roy Vanderford; Business Manager Sherri Cavanaugh; and Administrative Coordinator Tammy Coxen.
- **Leaders in Excellence President Terry Molloy,** who collaborated as part of CSW's study team throughout the project.

For More Information

Larry Good, President
Corporation for a Skilled Workforce
2890 Carpenter Rd, Suite 1600
Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48108
(734) 971-6060
lagood@skilledwork.org

Terry Molloy, President
Leaders in Excellence
6551 Devonshire Heights Rd
Harrisburg, PA 17111
(717) 545-2024
terrymolloy@earthlink.net

Mary Pepperl, President
The Workforce Board of Northern Cook County
2604 E. Dempster, Suite 502
Park Ridge, IL 60068
(847) 699-9195
mpepperl@workforceboard.org

Linda J. Kaiser, Executive Director
The Chicago Workforce Board
60 West Randolph Street, Suite 200
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 553-4430
lkaiser@chicagoworkforceboard.com

Susan Flessner, Dean of Workforce Training
Lake Land College
305 Richmond Ave E.
Matoon, IL 61938
(217) 235-2222
sflessne@lakeland.cc.il.us

Bashir Ali, Director
Central Illinois Workforce Development Board
406 S. Elm Street
Peoria, IL 61605
(309) 671-3114
bali@workforcenetwork.com

Table of Contents

How to Use This Report **1**

Executive Summary **2**

Methodology 2

Critical Success Factors 2

Key Learnings 5

Next Steps 6

Introduction **7**

Overview 7

Methodology 8

Participating Sites **11**

Site Anonymity 14

Services To Employers **15**

Defining Critical Success Factors for Employer Services 15

Potential Critical Success Factors and Indicators Used to Organize the Study 15

Business Services Approaches 16

Key Design Considerations 17

Choices: Who Operates Business Services? 18

Choices: The Pros and Cons of Fee for Service 18

Choices: Managing Employer Services With Account Representatives and Contact Management Systems 19

Measures of Success 20

Reframing the Critical Success Factors 20

Services to Employers – Site Summary 23

Services To Job Seekers **26**

Defining Critical Success Factors for Job Seeker Services 26

Potential Critical Success Factors and Indicators Used to Organize the Study 26

Job Seeker Services Approaches 27

Key Design Considerations 27

Choices: Organizing the Staff 28

Choices: Organizing the Center's "Front Door" 29

Choices: Connecting Job Seekers to Broader Service Range 29

Choices: The Pros and Cons of Fee-based Services to Job Seekers..30
Tracking Job Seeker Services..30
Measures of Success..30
Reframing the Critical Success Factors..31
Services to Job Seekers – Site Summary..33
One-Stop Center Design And Management 36
Defining Critical Success Factors for Design and Management....................................36
Potential Critical Success Factors and Indicators Used to Organize the Study 36
Governance and Leadership: State Role 37
Governance and Leadership: Local Role 38
Management..40
Measurement...42
Marketing 42
Reframing the Critical Success Factors...42
One-Stop Design and Management – Site Summary 44
Conclusions 47
Key Learnings..47
Revised Critical Success Factors..50
On-Going Evaluation and Replication 53
Process Steps...53

How to Use This Report

This report is structured to provide state and local policy makers and practitioners with information about Critical Success Factors in the implementation and operation of one-stop centers based upon a study of 20 centers overseen by 12 workforce boards across the country. Among the contents are:

- **Critical Success Factors –** The report contains the preliminary factors that the four workforce boards leading this project identified as the ones they believed were most important to examine. The report is organized into chapters for each category of success they identified – services to employers, services to job seekers and one-stop center design and management. The conclusion contains proposed modifications to those factors. One caution: the authors do not believe that all of these factors are relevant at every site. Local context is critical; these represent a solid starting point based on considerable nationwide experience.
- **Data Matrices –** The research teams compiled considerable data during its site visits. Each chapter contains a summary chart that shows at a quick read the distribution on each factor among the sites studied. More detailed matrices showing site by site information can be found in the Appendix to this report. The reader will find the sites identified only by number, reflecting the commitment made to provide anonymity to the sites consistent with benchmarking ethics.
- **Key Learnings –** Some patterns emerged through the study tour; those are captured as key learnings, which build from the critical success factors.

Executive Summary

The Workforce Board of Northern Cook County, the Chicago Workforce Board, Crossroads Workforce Investment Board, and the Central Illinois Workforce Development Board joined in partnership to think creatively about how to meet the state's vision for a "high quality, employer-driven, innovative, proactive workforce development system that supports economic development and offers universal access to skill development opportunities." The four workforce boards obtained a technical assistance grant from the Illinois Department of Employment Security, Job Training Division, to benchmark other one-stop centers nationally to identify critical success factors and approaches and practices that would help achieve the state's vision.

Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW), an Ann Arbor, Michigan-based not-for-profit organization that specializes in workforce policy and implementation questions in communities nationwide, in partnership with Leaders in Excellence, Inc., was engaged to facilitate and manage a one-stop center benchmarking project to tackle this national research initiative. The specific goals of the project were outlined as:

- Identify and explore critical success factors of one-stops;
- Examine other centers to understand how they serve customers and manage operations;
- Define appropriate expectations for the one-stops in meeting critical success factors;
- Establish a benchmarking process that other boards and one-stops can replicate; and
- Advance the dialogue about one-stop quality nationally as well as across Illinois.

Methodology

The four workforce boards conducting this research defined several categories of potential critical success factors for one-stop excellence, including services to employers, services to job seekers, and one-stop management and design. The research team focused on examining the choices made by various centers regarding those factors, and on looking at which factors appeared to have had the greatest impact on each center's success as identified locally.

Seven study teams were deployed across the country. The teams included a mix of workforce board members, board staff, state agency senior managers, and one-stop partners spanning the Department of Employment Security, Workforce Investment Act funded organizations, Department of Human Services (DHS) – Division of Community Operations, DHS - Office of Rehabilitation Services, and community colleges. Two researchers from Corporation for a Skilled Workforce and Leaders in Excellence led each group to manage the complicated logistics, facilitate and focus the discussion, compile the information obtained, and collect supporting materials that were later organized into an inventory. All together, the field study involved 20 different centers and 12 different workforce boards.

Critical Success Factors

As a result of the research, the following emerged as 10 critical success factors that workforce boards and one-stop operators can use as a framework for considering what they will use as local criteria for defining expectations from one-stop centers. It is important to stress that the research indicated the importance of local context, and these factors should be weighed in that light.

Critical Success Factors for Employer Services

Critical Success Factor 1: Satisfying Employers

Indicators to consider –
Does the one-stop center:

- Measure at center level, not program level;
- Measure satisfaction both with processes and outcomes;
- Disaggregate satisfaction data;
- Consult with employers about the critical success factors for the one-stop center; and
- Use customer behavior as an indicator of satisfaction.

Critical Success Factor 2: Managing Employer Services

Indicators to consider –
Does the one-stop center:

- Make employer services a priority;
- Manage employer services as a unified activity;
- Maintain a database to track contacts, delivery of services, and outcomes;
- Build a quality team;
- Become knowledgeable about key industries;
- Define the one-stop center's market niche in the community;
- Establish one-on-one relationships with employers; and
- Use customer satisfaction trends to make changes.

Critical Success Factor 3: Delivering Quality Services to Employers

Indicators to consider –
Does the one-stop center:

- Operate with a "never say no" attitude;
- Work in "real time" with a sense of urgency;
- Develop fee-for-service activities to meet employer needs;
- View other public intermediaries as partners, not as competitors; and
- Design services based upon customer requirements.

Critical Success Factors for Job Seeker Services

Critical Success Factor 4: Satisfying Job Seekers

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- Measure satisfaction with the center as a whole;

- Examine variations in satisfaction among types of customers;
- Measure process as well as outcomes;
- Seek input from job seekers about critical features; and
- Compare the center's customer satisfaction level with that of other operations.

Critical Success Factor 5: Managing Job Seeker Services

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- Establish a professional appearance;
- Expedite customer flow;
- Manage peak loads;
- Avoid creating barriers such as waiting chairs or lines;
- Measure its results; and
- Modify services and delivery strategies based on market needs and customer demands.

Critical Success Factor 6: Delivering Quality Services to Job Seekers

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- Make the resource room the focal point of the center;
- Provide customers with comprehensive access to training and education services; and
- Obtain additional resources to meet customer needs.

Critical Success Factors in Design and Management

Critical Success Factor 7: Leadership

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- Have strong Workforce Board leadership; and
- Have One-Stop Operator leadership.

Critical Success Factor 8: Management

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- Have a neutral center manager;
- Provide staff development;
- Manage continuous quality improvement; and
- Use technology effectively.

Critical Success Factor 9: Measurement

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- Use center wide measures; and
- Operate using integrated information systems.

Critical Success Factor 10: Marketing

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- Build clear brand identity; and
- Identify and strategically pursue service niches.

Following the research, a member of the CSW team met with each of the four sponsoring workforce boards as well as their local one-stop partners to review the data and to trigger a process of self-assessment against it that was appropriate to the state of development of their one-stop centers and partnerships.

CSW is also developing a process for workforce boards to continually monitor their progress in systematically moving local one-stop centers toward adopted levels of excellence. This process is based on the outcomes of this benchmarking project and other quality assurance and continuous improvement models used in both private and public sector organizations.

Key Learnings

As the research team considered the patterns that persisted across sites, a series of factors emerged that informed the defining of critical success factors and the implementation of quality one-stop centers.

Leadership matters

- Local Leadership is crucial to one-stop center success.
- Local Workforce Boards can play a pivotal role in one-stop center quality.
- One-Stop Operators and Partners make strategic decisions jointly and provide solid leadership at high quality centers.
- States can accelerate – or slow down – innovation.

Management matters

- Center Managers responsible for the full operation provide crucial direction.
- Investments in management tools are essential.
- Neutral sites become stars faster than old agency offices do.
- Staffed, quality resource rooms are centerpieces in thriving centers.
- Center design flexibility is enhanced if unemployment compensation benefits are not managed on site.

Employer Services are reinvented

- Centers enhance employer services by creating unified teams of account representatives.
- Centers need to strategically decide on which employers to focus their attention.

Creating a market identity is hard but matters

- Brand building requires time and resources.
- Ensuring the new identity is associated with quality is essential.

One-Stop Center Measurement is just beginning

- Center wide measures are just now being created.

Next Steps

CSW and the four sponsoring workforce boards are collaborating to share the results widely, both within Illinois and nationally. We believe that the information compiled through this project and summarized in this report is the nation's first significant baseline about critical success factors for one-stop centers. Our hope is that this effort can serve as an important first step toward building a common understanding across the nation about what contributes to one-stop excellence, and what should therefore be expected from and measured of centers.

Introduction

Overview

In the fall of 2000, the chair of the Workforce Board of Northern Cook County, Illinois asked the board and its staff whether benchmarking one-stop centers might give the board some insights about the quality of their local centers and where to encourage them to focus and to improve. His idea led to leaders from four Workforce Boards across Illinois joining in partnership to think creatively about how to meet the state's vision for a "high quality, employer-driven, innovative, proactive workforce development system that supports economic development and offers universal access to skill development opportunities." What would a system look like that fulfilled that vision? What approaches and practices would be most likely to take us there? What yardstick could be best used to determine whether the vision was attained?

The Workforce Board of Northern Cook County, the Chicago Workforce Board, Crossroads Workforce Investment Board, and the Central Illinois Workforce Development Board decided to investigate these questions, and obtained a technical assistance grant from the Illinois Department of Employment Security, Workforce Development Division, to support that work. The four workforce boards engaged the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW), an Ann Arbor, Michigan-based not-for-profit organization that specializes in working policy and implementation questions in communities nationwide, in partnership with Leaders in Excellence, Inc., to facilitate and manage a one-stop center benchmarking project to tackle this national research initiative. The specific goals of the project were to:

- Identify and explore critical success factors of one-stops;
- Examine other centers to understand how they serve customers and manage operations;
- Define appropriate expectations for the one-stops in meeting critical success factors;
- Establish a benchmarking process that other boards and one-stops can replicate; and
- Advance the dialogue about one-stop quality nationally as well as across Illinois.

While several types of benchmarking can be undertaken, benchmarking is not to be confused with "best practices." Best practice case studies are *vertical* research projects that examine a practice or set of practices at a given locale in depth. Benchmarking, on the other hand, looks at pre-identified factors across several sites. It is *horizontal* research that compares a wide variety of practices related to a single factor of success. Is there a relationship, for example, between the approach one-stops use to market services to employers and the growth of job openings posted through the center? Is there a relationship between scope of services provided to job seekers and the degree to which the center can attract workers who are already employed but seeking to upgrade their education or employment?

Many times the project partners wrestled with defining "excellence" in a one-stop center. Although the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 formalized the concept of one-stops in law, the idea was not new. Many states and localities have experimented with one-stops for as much as 15 years. The U.S. Department of Labor provided planning and implementation grants to states between 1994-1999 as well as funding "learning labs" around the country. Workforce boards in many states have adopted certification or "chartering" frameworks to recognize excellence and identify opportunities for continuous improvement. After so many years, so much money, and so much experience, the question remains: what distinguishes a "good" one-stop from one that is mediocre? How have one-stops risen above program silos to become something greater than a sum of the parts?

What we found during this project is that states, workforce boards, and one-stop operators generally lack quantitative information to measure the success of centers. In part because funding still comes through discrete programs which carry their own performance measurement systems, the investment to build center wide measures and data has been slow to emerge. There are only bare beginnings of efforts to develop meaningful center wide measurement systems.

The one-stop system is not alone in this dilemma. The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) noted that “Lack of industry data and the absence of standard measurements have frustrated people hoping to make decisions about training by comparing proven results…Without those hard facts, training has little ammunition to defend itself against budget cuts and assaults on its value.” ASTD was referring to training divisions within private industry, but the observation is appropriate. If indeed “what gets measured gets managed,” local workforce boards and one-stop operators are now managing performance by individual program measures, while making center wide decisions with limited or no supporting information systems.

This project is a step toward filling that gap. The four workforce boards conducting this research defined several categories of potential critical success factors for one-stop excellence, including services to employers, services to job seekers, and one-stop management and design. The research team focused on examining the choices made by various centers regarding those factors, and on looking at which factors appeared to have had the greatest impact on each center’s success as identified locally.

We believe that the information compiled through this project and summarized in this report is the nation’s first significant baseline about critical success factors for one-stop centers. Our hope is that this effort can serve as an important first step toward building a common understanding across the nation about what contributes to one-stop excellence, and what should therefore be expected from and measured of centers.

One caution is worth making at the outset. While some factors of quality should have consistency at a national or state level, one-stop design and management choices must be grounded in the realities of the community within which the center operates. A one-stop that is successful in its current environment might not be successful if picked up and moved intact to another site. There is no perfect approach that can be emulated in all locales; only thoughtful, strategic approaches that make sense in their local contexts.

Methodology

The project design was based upon doing field research, primarily site visits to a diverse set of one-stops around the country, using a common analytic process focused around critical success factors. The project was conducted in three major phases.

Phase 1: Planning and Protocol Development

The planning phase included:

- **Establishing an Advisory Team** – The directors and other key staff of the four sponsoring workforce boards, as well as state stakeholders, met with CSW several times to frame the project and to make key design and implementation decisions at appropriate points.
- **Researching Models –** CSW gathered information from various national sources, states, and other local workforce boards both on benchmarking practices and on performance measures and criteria being used. Additionally, CSW examined quality improvement programs that identify strategies and processes that define high performance organizations such as the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, the Workforce Excellence Network, and the Illinois' state quality council, the Lincoln Foundation.
- **Identifying Critical Success Factors –** The most important part of the planning phase was identifying the critical success factors that would form the basis for field work. An ad hoc committee of private sector members from the four workforce boards framed the factors they believed were most important to understand. Their priorities were turned into an initial framework of potential critical success factors grouped into three categories: services to employers, services to job seekers, and one-stop design and management.
- **Convening a National Advisory Group –** The four sponsoring workforce boards and CSW convened a group of national advisors from organizations ranging from the U.S. Department of Labor to national associations representing business, labor, states, workforce boards, and others. The panel provided feedback on the critical success factors framework and helped identify centers that exemplify various approaches to those success factors.
- **Identifying Sites for Study –** The 20 centers visited and studied during this project were chosen based upon CSW's knowledge of one-stop centers around the country and input from the National Advisory Group. Those chosen were not assumed to be the "best" across all critical success factors; rather, those sites were selected based on how they could individually contribute to the study team's knowledge of services to employers, services to job seekers, and one-stop design and management. An effort was also made to ensure the sites visited included a representative range of state policy environments and host agencies. The 20 sites are overseen by 12 workforce boards, are geographically diverse, and vary widely in size.

Phase 2: Field Studies

Activities in the field study phase included:

- **Designing a Baseline Review and Self-Assessment Process –** Each site completed a baseline review that collected standard information across all sites. The baseline provided consistent comparative data and helped the study teams understand the environment they would be visiting. The self-assessment allowed study teams to understand where the one-stop center operators saw their own strengths and weaknesses so that the researchers could focus their inquiry during the limited time available during the site visits.
- **Conducting Site Visits** – Seven study teams were deployed across the country. The teams included a mix of workforce board members, board staff, state agency senior managers, and one-stop partners spanning the Department of Employment Security (DES), Workforce Investment Act funded organizations, Department of Human Services (DHS) – Division of Community Operations, DHS - Office of Rehabilitation Services, and community colleges. Two researchers from Corporation for a Skilled Workforce and Leaders in Excellence led each group to manage the complicated logistics, facilitate and focus the discussion, compile

the information obtained, and collect supporting materials. All together, the field study involved 20 different centers and 12 different workforce boards. The practices examined reflect those at another 30 centers operating in the 12 communities that were not visited because of time limits and site leadership feedback that those centers would be very similar to those studied. A debriefing session was held at the end of each visit for the study team to review key observations.

Phase 3: Analysis and Use of Results

The analysis phase included:

- **Synthesizing the Learnings with the Advisory Team –** CSW's project team met with the four sponsoring workforce board directors and key staff in November 2001 to identify and articulate key observations across the entire study tour. The framework for this report was determined during that meeting as well.
- **Asking the Sites to Review Their Own Data –** The report contains a great deal of detailed information about practices and choices at the sites. Each was offered an opportunity to review the information compiled about them for accuracy.
- **Obtaining Report Review by the National Advisory Group –** This report was provided to members of the National Advisory Group for their comments prior to finalization.
- **Defining Key Findings –** The project team, working with the four workforce boards, developed a framework of 10 key findings about one-stop excellence that emerged from the research. Those learnings are detailed in this report.
- **Developing a Fixed Set of Criteria –** One project objective was to be able to craft a prototype fixed set of criteria that workforce boards and one-stop operators could use to gauge their own success, strengths and areas to improve upon. Those criteria are also found in the Key Findings section of this report.
- **Putting the Information to Use Locally –** Following the research, a member of the CSW team met with each of the four sponsoring workforce boards as well as their local one-stop partners to review the data and to trigger a process of self-assessment against it that was appropriate to the state of development of their one-stop centers and partnerships.
- **Disseminating the Results –** CSW and the four sponsoring workforce boards are collaborating to share the results widely, both within Illinois and nationally. Findings were presented at the Illinois Governor's Workforce Development Conference in October 2001, as well as to the Illinois Workforce Partnership in December 2001 and to Illinois' Local Workforce Investment Board Chairs organization in February 2002. CSW and the Workforce Board directors presented the results at the National Association of Workforce Boards conference in March 2002 and at the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals conference in May 2002. Copies of this report will be made available widely, both in hard copy and electronically.
- **Developing an Ongoing Evaluation Process and Replication Strategy –** CSW is developing a process for workforce boards to continually monitor their progress in systematically moving local one-stop centers toward adopted levels of excellence. This process is based on the outcomes of this benchmarking project and other quality assurance and continuous improvement models used in both private and public sector organizations. A summary of this process appears later in this report.

Participating Sites

Louisville, Kentucky

Career Resources
Carletta Buckman
505 S. Third St, Suite 201
Louisville, KY 40202
(502) 574-4780
cbuckman@louky.org

Kentuckiana Works
Robert A. Huffman
410 W. Chestnut, Suite 200
Louisville, KY 40202
(502) 574-4711
rhuffman@louky.org

Traverse City, Cadillac, Kalkaska, Michigan

Traverse City Michigan Works! Center
Grand Traverse Service Center
Jane Sage
1209 South Garfield
Traverse City, MI 49684
(231) 922-3700

Kalkaska Michigan Works! Center
Kalkaska Service Center
Jane Sage
103 Third St
Kalkaska, MI 49646
(800) 442-1074

Cadillac Michigan Works! Center
Wexford Service Center
Jane Sage
1909 N. Mitchell St.
Cadillac, MI 49601
(231) 775-3408

Northwest Michigan Council of Governments
Elaine Wood
P.O. Box 506
Traverse City, MI 49685-0506
(231) 929-5000
ewood@nwm.cog.mi.us

San Diego County, California

East County Career Center
Richard Butts
924 E. Main St
El Cajon, CA 92021
(619) 530-3900

North County Inland Career Center
Berni Haskell
1935 East Valley Parkway
Escondido, CA 92027
(760) 738-0274

San Diego Workforce Partnership
Lawrence Fitch / Mary Sabillo
1551 Fourth Ave, Suite 600
San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 238-1445
lgfitch@workforce.org
marys@workforce.org

Salt Lake City, Utah

Metro Employment Center
720 South 200 East
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
(801) 536-7000

Utah Department of Workforce Services
Curt Stewart
140 East 300 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
(801) 526-4315
clstewart@ws.state.ut.us

Sunnyvale, California

Nova Workforce Investment Board and One-Stop Center
Michael Curran
505 W. Olive Ave, Suite 550
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
(408) 730-7232
mcurran@novaworks.org

Columbus County, North Carolina

Columbus County JobLink
Southeastern Community College
Teresa Triplett
4564 Chadbourne Highway
Whiteville, NC 28742
(910) 642-7141 x318
ttriplett@mail.southeast.cc.nc.us

Cape Fear Workforce Development Board
Margie Parker
1480 Harbour Drive
Wilmington, NC 28401
mparker@capefearcog.org

Wake County- Swinburne, North Carolina

Wake County JobLink
Liane Simpson
220 Swinburne St
Raleigh, NC 27610
(919) 212-7781
lsimpson@county.wake.nc.us

Capitol Area Workforce Development Consortium
Brenda Savage
PO Box 550
Raleigh, NC 27602
(919) 856-6048
bsavage@county.wake.nc.us

Wayne County, North Carolina

Wayne County JobLink
William Pate
309 N. William
Goldsboro, NC 27534
(919) 731-7950
william.pate@ncmail.net

Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board
Tammy Childers
1341 South Glenburnie Rd
New Bern, NC 28562
(252) 636-6901
childers@ecwdb.org

Berks County, Pennsylvania

Berks County CareerLink
Pat Adamczyk
501 Crescent Avenue
Reading, PA 19605
(610) 988-1300
padamczy@bccl.org

Berks County Workforce Investment Board
Edward J. McCann
501 Crescent Avenue
Reading, PA 19605
(610) 988-1363
emccann@bccl.org

Pittsburgh / Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

Pittsburgh / Allegheny County Career Link –
Downtown Pittsburgh
Joe Stratico
425 Sixth Avenue, 22nd Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
(412) 552-7100
jstratico@dli.state.pa.us

Pittsburgh / Allegheny County Career Link –
McKeesport
Ella Holsinger
346 Fifth Ave
McKeesport, PA 15132
(412) 664-6969
eholsinger@dli.state.pa.us

Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board
Ron Painter
425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 1750
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
(412) 552-7097
rpainter@trwib.org

Boston, Massachusetts

The Workplace
Thomas Ford
99 Chauncy St, 2nd Floor
Boston, MA 02111
(617) 737-0093
tford@detma.org

Job Net
Rosemary Alexander
210 South Street
Boston, MA 02111
(617) 338-0809

Boston Private Industry Council
Nancy Snyder
2 Oliver St
7th Floor
Boston, MA 02109
(617) 423-3755
nsnyder@bostonpic.org

Springfield and Holyoke, Massachusetts

FutureWorks Career Center
Rexine Picard
1 Federal St, Building 1033
Springfield, MA 01105
(413) 858-2800

CareerPoint
David Gadaire
850 High St.
Holyoke, MA 01040
(413) 532-4900

Hampden County Regional Employment Board
Richard Neveu
1441 Main Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413) 755-1359
rnevue@rebhc.org

Site Anonymity

While one-stops in all the above areas were visited, the report does not identify which site yielded which findings. This report is not about sites; it is about approaches and practices across sites. The “Benchmarking Code of Conduct” published by the American Productivity and Quality Center includes:

- Treat benchmarking interchange as confidential to the individuals and companies involved.
- The use or communication of a benchmarking partner’s name with the data obtained or practices observed requires prior permission of that partner.
- Avoid communicating a contact’s name in an open forum without the contact’s prior permission.

There is no relationship between the order in which the sites are listed above and the order in which sites are listed for comparison information across critical success factors in the matrices found in the Appendix.

Also, while the study teams visited 20 sites, the results are grouped into 14 data sets, reflecting that some of the sites within a region operate on the same model and operational choices.

Services To Employers

Defining Critical Success Factors for Employer Services

Determining what factors are critical to the success of services to employers was of primary interest to the private sector workforce board members who helped frame the issues to be studied. Their belief was that the ultimate success of their one-stop centers was inextricably linked with their service delivery to and credibility with employers. Based on the perspectives and feedback from those employers, the study team came up with the following potential critical success factors to examine regarding business services along with some of the possible indicators about those factors.

Potential Critical Success Factors and Indicators Used to Organize the Study

Satisfying Employers

- Increasing employer satisfaction;
- Differentiating employer satisfaction by company size and industry;
- Using a variety of employer satisfaction measures;
- Measuring sample of employers or all;
- Improving the one-stop's image with employers;
- Crafting and using a satisfaction strategy;
- Increasing the number of new and repeat business customers;
- Increasing the quantity of services purchased by business customers;
- Achieving an increase in job openings posted; and
- Increasing the level of job openings posted with the one-stop center by employers.

Managing Employer Services

- Choosing a specific management model – where business services are positioned;
- Managing with a business perspective;
- Developing and using a business plan;
- Obtaining non-federal funds to support business services;
- Expanding scope of services by engaging additional partners;
- Whether external providers use own names or one-stop or operator name;
- Using existing staff to develop and deliver business services;
- Defining clear market niche strategies;
- Targeting specific industries;
- Using a tracking and reporting system designed to support employer services;
- Reporting to workforce board regarding business services;
- Integrating employer services among one-stop partners; and

- The average number of employer customers per month.

Delivering Services to Employers

- Providing candidate recruitment, matching, screening, and assessment;
- Providing training services;
- Conducting background checks, skill and aptitude testing;
- Providing business services such as planning, staff development, career mapping, and grant writing;
- How income from fee-based services is used;
- Employers can post job orders over the internet;
- Brokering services to employers;
- Marketing "no cost" and "for fee" services in same marketing materials; and
- Market identity.

Measuring Success

- Workforce Board requires business focus;
- Workforce Board sets targets / priorities for type of industries;
- Workforce Board sets performance criteria for business services;
- Workforce Board requires fee for service;
- Operator sets measures for success; and
- Measuring market penetration.

Business Services Approaches

In studying business services, the research team met with employer customers of one-stops at many sites, as well as interviewing both workforce board members and staff and one-stop operators and staff delivering services to business customers. Across the sites studied, the researchers found a variety of approaches being pursued for how to focus and deliver services to employers.

In some instances, the workforce board directly delivers services to employers with its own staff. In others, the one-stop partners form a joint team across agencies to do so. In still others, this function is managed by one of the partners, such as the employment service staff or the Workforce Investment Act funded organization. The evidence did not point to one of these approaches being clearly critical in determining the success of business services. Typically, the workforce boards and/or one-stop partners in the communities studied selected their approach based upon factors important within their local context, including:

- State or local policy or policy vacuums;
- Relative strength of the board, operator, and service providers;
- Philosophical considerations about appropriate positioning of services;
- Unique competitors or lack thereof in the community;
- Budgeting or cost allocation issues;

- History of relationships among partners or between providers and the board;
- Level of maturity of one-stop system development; and
- Staff capacity.

Key Design Considerations

Across the strategies chosen, five key design factors emerged:

- **Operating with a "never say no" attitude.** Invariably, when the researchers visited a highly active business services operator, the team found a passion for resolving the employer's need. These operators try to never say they can't help the customer; rather they go to extraordinary lengths to find or develop the help needed. Some of the operators of these services take great pride in their skill in brokering a wide array of business services, including ones that veer far away from job matching and training. They do this in the belief that excellent service brokering builds a long-term customer relationship with the business in question.
- **Creating a unified team of account representatives.** Business customer satisfaction with services appeared to be consistently stronger when a single, unified team worked cohesively to provide that service rather than when several organizations provided their own services to employers in isolation. Whether done by employees of a single service provider, such as the workforce board or a single agency, or done by an integrated team involving staff from several partners, the key business rule is that a single account representative is authorized to work with the employer on behalf of the entire one-stop center or system. The work of those representatives is typically supported by a contact management information system used by all involved in the function.
- **Strategically choosing businesses served.** A recurring realization among many people crafting these services is that traditional public agency approaches to business services have frequently amounted to serving the easiest customers to obtain (such as large, low-wage employers). A number of sites visited are determining clear niches of focus, often connecting to industry clusters and/or economic development priorities in the community. One-stop centers have finite resources; using them where the impact and leverage can be the greatest appears to be a key to success.
- **Using fee-supported services as a tool in the service mix.** Several of the sites studied are using a fee-for-service strategy as a component of their service mix. In a few, this is becoming a major element of their approach, generating $100,000 or more per year. Sites select fee-for-service strategies for two reasons: to broaden their ability to provide services to businesses and to engage in transactions that employers value sufficiently to purchase – a real world test of validity in the marketplace. Perspectives on this factor vary greatly. While several sites saw fee-supported work as a natual diversification technique, a number of others concluded that their community did not include a market for fee-based services at a scale that would produce significant revenue to justify the effort, while others saw this as counter to their mission.
- **Engaging customers directly in service design –** Several of the sites studied chose to actively use business customers as advisors in their design. These could be workforce board members, focus group participants, center advisory committees, chamber of commerce

leaders, or others. These sites could speak with great confidence that their strategic choices have been built from a customer perspective rather than an operator viewpoint.

Choices: Who Operates Business Services?

As noted earlier in this chapter, the areas studied chose several service designs customized to their local circumstances. Many if not all of the five critical success factors are being used regardless of model, as these three examples indicate.

Model 1: Workforce Board Staff

One region chose to drive business services from the workforce board level. The employees doing this work were selected and hired by the board, report directly to the board, and are on the board staff payroll. However, these staff work at the one-stop centers to organize employer contacts and to respond to employer needs. One "business strategist" is assigned to each one-stop office in the region and works full time out of that office. A key staff person at the board level convenes the strategists on a regular basis, provides direction, facilitates interaction, and conveys board goals and priorities. The strategists coordinate with the one-stop operators and their job developers to minimize duplication. They act as a team at the local level. Since the region has multiple operators for its many one-stops, driving employer services through board staff achieves consistency that might not otherwise be possible and minimizes competition among the sites for employer customers.

Model 2: Single Entity One-Stop Operator

In this community, the workforce board required a focus on employer services, but gave no further direction to the competitively procured operator about how that was to be operationally accomplished. The single-entity operator, which oversees one-stops throughout the region, used this opportunity to create its own business services division. The division has its own budget and dedicated staff. Under strong leadership from a former private sector entrepreneur, the division coordinates traditional "no fee" services into packages with "for fee" services that address employer needs not otherwise possible within the constraints of the system. The division uses private partners from the community to fill in the gaps for services for which it does not currently possess expertise, but is striving to reduce its dependence on subcontractors. The division also brokers services to others while maintaining its position as a focal point for developing responses to employer needs.

Model 3: Multi-Partner One-Stop Operator

In this region, several partners banded together to form a collaborative to manage the one-stop centers. Each of the region's two comprehensive centers has a unified management team with a jointly funded center manager. Business service teams comprised of staff from several partner agencies work in unison under a single team manager at both centers. The teams are focusing their efforts on working with businesses that are growing and are seeking higher skilled workers as a key strategy.

Choices: The Pros and Cons of Fee for Service

- ***No fee***

A wide range of "no fee" services are possible in regions where allocations of federal program funds are sufficiently large to meet demand. Boards and operator staff in these regions express a preference for delivering the maximum variety of services possible without charging fees, although they admit they may be driven to fees in the future if funding becomes an issue. One workforce board felt there was enough to be done to improve the quality of existing services without expending time and energy on the development of "for fee" services. Another area that already had quality services simply didn't think there was any reason to pursue fee-based services except as a last resort.

- ***Fee-based Services***

  One area that has aggressively pursued fee-based services has done so for several reasons. First and foremost is meeting employer needs that were not being met in the community. As such, the services enhance the range of options available to employers to increase their productivity. It is an economic development strategy. Secondly, the effort establishes credibility with the employers. Since the operator can offer services for a fee and broker or subcontract for what they can not deliver themselves, they never have to say "no" or "we can't do that" to an employer. Further, employers tend to value more highly what they pay for. In the long run, the fee-based approach is also aimed at sustainability of the one-stops and, to a greater degree, sustainability of the private non-profit organization that operates the centers.

Choices: Managing Employer Services With Account Representatives and Contact Management Systems

All regions where employer services were considered a key to success locally operate with unified account representative systems, supported by their own employer contact tracking systems. The account representatives are organized in various ways, including mixes of geographic and industry specialists. They are sometimes located centrally and other times at one-stop centers. The site appears irrelevant typically because most employer contacts are made either at the firm's offices or by telephone or electronic communication. It is clear that these representatives are positioned as relationship managers, acting as a key liaison and ombudsman for their employer clients. One of the single most valuable aspects of this model is that the one-stop center can assure employers they'll have a single point of contact for services and won't have to fend off multiple agencies seeking the same relationship.

This system demands a good and well-used contact management tool. These databases are relatively recent in origin and are not connected to state data gathering and reporting systems. Partners are enabled and encouraged to read or add to the data, with the expectation that shared information will improve customer service and reduce duplicated efforts. The tracking systems cover such items as company name, address, phone and fax numbers; contact person name and e-mail address; federal identification number, standard industrial code; contact history including contact type, subject, date, location, name of contactor, case notes, and projected date of next contact; WARN data including date of WARN notice, number of affected workers, targeted lay-off date, Trade Adjustment Assistance/NAFTA eligibility; and willingness to participate in various school-to-work activities or work-based learning activities. The region that is heavily targeting fee-based services uses its database to track contracts for services, payments, and delivery of scheduled services.

Measures of Success

Among those providing services at no cost to employers, formal measures of success are confined to employer satisfaction measures as required by the Workforce Investment Act. On an informal, non-quantified basis, success is measured in terms of anecdotes and stories that reflect an increasingly higher regard for the one-stop system. Employers with whom researchers spoke indicated that the staff were much more responsive, more customer-oriented, more attuned to their needs, and less bureaucratic.

The operator which is heavily invested in fee-based services measures success on the basis of number of new customers, number of repeat customers, increased dollar volume of sales, increased job orders (from employers who use fee-based services), and higher level (skill and wage) of jobs posted.

One region has developed cross-cutting measures for services to employers, although has not yet implemented them:

- Appropriateness and timeliness of referrals for job openings;
- Retention of employees hired;
- Appropriateness of education and training to local labor demand;
- Degree of business market penetration;
- Degree of business-customer retention;
- Reduction of duration of unemployment insurance payments;
- Services needed versus services available.

Measurement instruments and methods envisioned by this region include:

- Customer satisfaction surveys;
- Business focus groups;
- Management information system data;
- 52-week retention data;
- Staff feedback; and
- Customer service records/files.

Reframing the Critical Success Factors

Based on the research, a reframing of the original critical success factors and indicators incorporates the key learnings across the varied models and sites.

Critical Success Factor 1: Satisfying Employers

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- **Measure at center level, not program level.** Measure employer satisfaction for the center as a whole and document trends over time.
- **Measure satisfaction both with processes and outcomes.** Measure employer satisfaction in terms of processes (e.g., ease of use of web-based services) as well as outcomes.

- **Disaggregate satisfaction data.** Differentiate satisfaction among industries and employer size to determine relative success in order to better target marketing and services and/or to determine the one-stop's most appropriate niche in the community.
- **Consult with employers about the critical success factors for the one-stop center.** Become clear as to what is mission critical for a business services team and focus efforts based upon customer feedback.
- **Use customer behavior as an indicator of satisfaction.** Quantify and track image perception changes by examining the volume of repeat usage, new customers, increased level of job postings (pay and skill/education requirements), and focus group responses.

Critical Success Factor 2: Managing Employer Services

Indicators to consider –
Does the one-stop center:

- **Make employer services a priority.** Devote significant resources to serving employers and measure success partly in terms of business services.
- **Manage employer services as a unified activity.** Create a team of account representatives whose time is dedicated to serving employers and are empowered to represent the system as a whole. Define the roles of partners in employer contacts and manage contacts and satisfaction as a center rather than program by program.
- **Maintain a database to track contacts, delivery of services, and outcomes.** Use the database as a tool to connect partners, with each contributing to and using the contact management system as a common mechanism.
- **Build a quality team.** Ensure account representatives enter with or acquire the skills and knowledge required to excel at serving employers.
- **Become knowledgeable about key industries.** Focus on building knowledge about industries that are key in the community, whether because they are large employers now or because they are growing, or because they are being nurtured for future growth.
- **Define the one-stop's market niche in the community.** Use market analysis, economic development information, and strategic relationships to determine the most opportune niche for the one-stop's services to employers.
- **Establish one-on-one relationships with employers.** Account representatives maintain regular contact with their accounts and provide those employers with a single contact person or point.
- **Use customer satisfaction trends to make changes.** Modify management processes and services to reflect feedback from customers.

Critical Success Factor 3: Delivering Quality Services to Employers

Indicators to consider –
Does the one-stop center:

- **Operate with a "never say no" attitude.** Find community resources to work on or solve an employer's issues when they go beyond the one-stop center's competencies. Nurture partnerships with other providers, both public and private, who can provide other needed services.

- **Work in "real time" with sense of urgency.** Employers don't have time for bureaucracy and will use speed of response as an indicator of service quality.
- **Develop fee-for-service activities to:**
  - Meet employer needs that are not possible with its existing resources;
  - Meet employer needs that are not being met by other providers in the community;
  - Increase credibility of the center; and
  - Fill gaps rather than to compete with private sector intermediaries.
- **View other public intermediaries as partners,** not as competitors.
- **Design services based upon customer requirements.** Establish the menu of employer services based on what employers need and want, rather than what the center wants to provide or is funded to provide.

Services to Employers – Site Summary

The following chart aggregates the mix of practice found across the sites studied. The appendices contain more detailed matrices that include site-by-site answers.

Satisfying Employers	
Documented increase in employer satisfaction	3 No 2 In process 9 Unknown/ Unavailable
Differentiates employer satisfaction by company size and industry	3 Yes 11 No
Uses variety of employer satisfaction measures	9 Yes 5 No Tools used (where designated): 4 Written surveys 4 Verbal survey/ interview 4 Focus groups 4 Phone surveys
Measures sample of employers or all	4 All 10 Sample
Evidence of image change	9 Yes 3 Image linked to host agency 2 Unknown/NA
Satisfaction strategy	6 Building personal relationships with customers 4 Yes 2 "Never tell employers we can't help them" 1 "Not promising what can't be delivered" 1 Unknown
Documented increase in new and repeat business clients	2 Yes 1 No 9 Unknown/ Unavailable 2 Unclear
Documented increase in purchased services	1 Yes 3 No 7 No/ few fee supported services 2 Varies from year to year 1 Unknown
Documented increase in job openings posted	7 Yes 7 Unknown
Documented increase in level of job openings received	1 Yes 2 No 11 Unknown
Managing Employer Services	
Management Model: positioning of business services	5 Separate Business Services unit/ team 4 Operator level 2 High priority 2 Low priority 1 Anthropologic/ opportunistic approach
Business perspective	4 Yes 4 Community focused 2 Relationship building focused 2 Market as providing "Workforce Solutions" 1 Fee based services used to gain credibility, not money

Develops and uses a business plan	13 Yes 1 No
Receives non-federal funds to support business services	4 Yes 10 No
Uses external partners to expand scope of services	10 Yes 4 No
External providers use own names or one-stop or operator name	9 Own name 1 One-Stop name 4 Unknown/NA
Used existing staff to develop and deliver business services	10 Yes 1 No 2 Both existing and new 1 Unknown
Market niche strategies	5 None 2 Entry level workers/ firms 2 In process 1 Small companies and not-for-profits 1 Local firms in small county 1 Local occupations 2 Unknown
Targets specific industries	5 Yes 6 No 2 Targets identified at Board level but not being enacted by One-Stop 1 Unknown
Uses a tracking and reporting system specific to employer services.	6 Yes 8 No
Reports to Workforce Board	14 Yes. Most common frequency (when given) was monthly.
Integrates employer services among one-stop partners	8 Yes 5 No 1 Other
Average number of employer customers per month	3 Less than 100 5 Greater than 100 2 Greater than 1000 4 Unknown
Delivering Services to Employers	
Candidate recruitment, matching, screening, assessment	14 Yes
Training Services	12 Yes 2 Unknown
Background checks, skill and aptitude testing	6 Yes 3 No 4 Skill and aptitude testing only 1 Aptitude testing only
Business Services such as planning, staff development, career mapping; grant writing	8 Yes 6 No
Use of income from fee-based services	5 Center services 1 Job Seeker services 1 "All income is program income that belongs to the Workforce Board" 7 NA
Employers can post job orders over the internet	14 Yes
Brokering of services to employers by the one-stop center	10 Yes 4 No

Markets "no cost" and for fee in same marketing materials	5 Yes 4 No 5 NA
Market Identity	6 Center/ Operator identity 3 Statewide brand identity 2 Network brand identity 3 Other
Measuring Success	
Workforce Board requires business focus	12 Yes 2 No
Workforce Board sets targets/ priorities for type of industries	8 Yes 5 No 1 In process
Workforce Board sets performance criteria for business services.	5 Yes 8 No 1 Other
Workforce Board requires fee for service	5 Yes 9 No
Operator sets measures for success	8 Yes 6 No
Measures market penetration	1 Yes 8 No 2 In process 3 Unknown

Services To Job Seekers

Defining Critical Success Factors for Job Seeker Services

The second category of critical success factors studied was how one-stop centers provide job seeker services. The study team developed the following potential critical success factors to examine regarding job seeker services along with some of the possible indicators about those factors.

Potential Critical Success Factors and Indicators Used to Organize the Study

Satisfying Job Seekers

- Increasing customer satisfaction;
- Differentiating satisfaction among customer types;
- Measuring satisfaction by center, rather than by program;
- Using a variety of customer satisfaction measures and tools;
- Measuring a sample of customers or all;
- Seeking customer input on measures;
- Changing the image of the center;
- Using a satisfaction strategy;
- Increasing new and repeat customers;
- Attracting a diverse array of customers in terms of education and experience; and
- Creating a professional appearance/image of the center, including such features as: greeter not behind a desk, common reception point, space for group services, clearly posted hours of operation, expanded hours, signage/brand name, clear internal signage, staff wearing name tags, menu of services displayed, vision/mission displayed.

Managing Job Seeker Services

- Choosing a specific management model for job seeker services;
- Customer flow;
- Scope of services;
- Serving universal population: evidence of broadening of customer base;
- Offering post-employment services;
- Managing quality through a strategy for building customer relationships; and
- Sharing data across partners.

Delivering Services to Job Seekers

- Making resource center a focal point for customers;
- Making self-help services readily available;
- Making computers available;

- Offering web-based services and managing center website;
- Average number of job seekers per month;
- Stationing staff full time in the resource area;
- Providing information through a wide array of media;
- Providing customers access to telephone, fax, photocopier, printer, internet;
- Offering resume preparation;
- Assessing skills;
- Providing aptitude testing;
- Providing career/ interest assessments;
- Offering job search skill training;
- Offering on-site education or skill training (ABE/GED, literacy, computer classes);
- Offering fee-based services;
- Crafting and using a service recovery strategy;
- Offering a job matching system;
- Measuring performance at a center or system level rather than program;
- Using state or local workforce board developed measures/standards;
- Using “indicators” to determine if the center is on track to meet outcomes; and
- Measuring staff satisfaction.

Job Seeker Services Approaches

Despite widely varying locations, some elements of job seeker service delivery are strikingly the same or similar across the sites studied. Resource rooms tend to be attractively designed and be positioned somewhere near the entry into the center. A standard basic menu of services is offered, with variation provided by adding services that go beyond a basic set of offerings required under the Workforce Investment Act. Most centers studied are either operating or striving to operate a unified customer flow process and tracking system, rather than staying with traditional agency-based processes. Services provided by staff are organized in many different ways, although functional teams organized around specific types of service are becoming common, based upon what was observed during the site visits.

Key Design Considerations

Of all the design choices examined during study team visits to 20 centers, two appeared to offer the most dramatic impact – the resource room and moving unemployment claims out of the one-stop center.

- **Staffed, quality resource rooms are integral to success.** The study teams consistently found extensive resource areas in the centers visited. Almost always, the resource area was located so it is the first thing a customer sees upon entering the center. The professional look and feel of the resource room appears to be crucial; the teams encountered sites that attributed customer volume and satisfaction in part to the design of the resource room. A crucial part of the strength of many resource rooms studied was the deployment of professional staff in the area to provide customers with assistance as they needed it. The team saw very busy rooms, with up to three staff at a time fully engaged in customer assistance.

- **Centers look and feel different when unemployment claims are not managed there.** In many centers, Unemployment Insurance (UI) is no longer present. Removing unemployment claims filing from the center appears to be the single biggest lever of change in service focus and community image. UI drives a bureaucratic client flow, complete with ropes, lines, number systems, and waiting chairs. Removing UI from the center allows the resource room to be the center of attention, and changes the atmosphere from one of compliance to one of voluntary job search and career development. One often stated fear about taking UI out of centers is that it will result in a drastically reduced flow of customers. The centers the study teams visited in states where UI is operated through call centers and the Internet dispelled that fear. They've found the ability to attract equally large customer volumes, in part because they can market their services more clearly as being about job seeking and career planning when they aren't seen as the "unemployment office."

Choices: Organizing the Staff

The centers studied take three primary approaches to staffing when organizing service delivery to job seekers: organizing staff as specialists, as generalists, or in functional or customer management teams. Every center has some staff who only provide specialized services, such as vocational rehabilitation counselors who work with a targeted set of clients at an intensive level. The comparison here is on the overall direction of the staffing strategy for the center.

Model 1: Specialist Approach

In the specialist approach, center employees have unique service or program positions within the one-stop. Staff may be dedicated to working in the resource area. There may be individuals who work consistently as counselors or as intake specialists, or on behalf of a single program such as Title I of the Workforce Investment Act, Welfare-to-Work, or Wagner-Peyser (employment service). The specialist approach may be the approach preferred when state policies inhibit multi-agency cost allocation. This approach tends to be the least integrated customer service model, with staff staying within their traditional agency work assignments.

Model 2: Generalist Approach

The generalist approach allows staff to follow a job seeker from resource room, to assessment, to enrollment in one or more programs, to follow-through in program activities and beyond. The generalist approach requires rotation of staff through various functional positions in the center and the ability to account for time as required. Advantages include:

- Personal one-on-one relationship with customers. Fewer customers "get lost;"
- Less staff burn-out;
- Shared accountability for program outcomes, resulting in better integration; and
- More seamless service delivery from the customer's perspective.

Model 3: Team Approach

At least two types of team approaches are being used. *Functional teams* are comprised of staff from multiple one-stop partners who work as teams based on a specific service component at the center. Such functional teams may be focused on assessment, resource room customer support, job search assistance, or other functions. Implementing this model appears to be a crucial step for centers that want to integrate their work across partners.

A second type of team approach is a *case management team*. In this approach, patterned after medical care, services are provided to customers by staff teams, representing different agencies, expertise and services. Several staff may share responsibility for a single customer, with each providing the services in which they specialize as needed by the customer. The service team typically compares and builds common case notes. This approach allows customers to access a wide range of expertise and for several staff to collaborate on meeting customer needs. However, this can be a very labor-intensive model, working best with smaller numbers of customers than many centers have.

Choices: Organizing the Center's "Front Door"

The centers visited handle the questions of attracting customers and then managing the initial entry of first-time customers in several different ways. A common theme is the importance of the resource room as a key part of that initial service mix. Centers vary widely as to whether they mandate an orientation to the center's services, and no clear pattern emerged on this point. Some of the operators visited have found that putting mini-centers close to employer sites, such as industrial parks, increases their ability to attract job seekers who are looking for positions with those firms.

In centers where unemployment insurance claim taking is still present, claimants represent a key point of entry for other services. Finally, many centers are using web sites and telephone systems to provide both marketing and customer service to job seekers.

Choices: Connecting Job Seekers to Broader Service Range

Centers are trying a variety of strategies to link their services to job seekers with other related and often crucial services.

- ***Making community college connections***

  Centers that are located at or have strong relationships with community colleges typically connect job seekers more readily to education and training opportunities, often offered just down the hall from the one-stop center. A number of centers visited are brokering multiple resources to help customers find funding needed to support their training and education.

- ***Connecting customers to key supportive services***

  Some of the centers studied provide extensive information and connections with child care and transportation assistance for center customers needing linkages to those and other support services.

- ***Linking with economic development***

  Centers that emphasize services to employers are more connected to economic development. These centers believe that by meeting the needs of employers, the needs of job seekers will also be met. Job seekers are then connected directly to both job leads and career advising tied to economic development priorities and to contacts with expanding firms. In one area, the business representatives of the one-stop centers call upon employers along with representatives of the economic development organization as a unified team. They are trying to portray to customers that workforce and economic development are two sides of the same coin.

Choices: The Pros and Cons of Fee-based Services to Job Seekers

Although some centers have embarked on fee for service strategies with employers, there is considerably more reluctance to charge fees to job seekers. A few centers that do advertise a fee for a given service generally also find a way to finance the cost for the job seeker through a "scholarship" or grant. The advertised fee mostly serves to remind the job seekers that they are indeed receiving a valuable service.

Tracking Job Seeker Services

Tracking job seeker services for the center as a whole represents a problem for everyone, and is a stumbling block for developing center-wide performance measures. Connecting information housed in several databases supporting the various agency partners remains a challenge in most locations. One growing trend that can make tracking easier and more timely is the deployment of membership cards encoded with key customer information. In the several centers visited that use these "swipe card" systems, the card readers allow the one-stop operator to gather accurate, timely information about the services customers used and other key information. The cards also allow centers to build long-term relationships and identity with customers by creating a growing pool of members or cardholders. The card readers can be used as a primary input into a center customer information system used to measure center wide activities and outcomes.

Measures of Success

No center visited had implemented a unified, center wide measurement of success. The study teams did encounter some workforce boards and one-stop center operators who are developing measures. Typically, they are focusing on crafting a handful of critical success factors and key indicators of those approaches, consistent with the purpose of this project.

The major barrier that appears to have slowed the development of center wide measures is the absence of unified or smoothly communicating databases between the various state and local service entities. One workforce board the study teams visited recently invested substantial funding to build an initial version of a unified data collection system, but has not yet gone far beyond program measures in the implementation phase. One region visited has defined but not yet implemented system measures, including:

- Appropriateness and timeliness of referrals for job openings;
- Long–term employability;
- Economic self-sufficiency;
- Reduced dependence on welfare and/or Unemployment Insurance;

- Removal of barriers to employment;
- Incentives for public assistance recipients to go to work;
- Appropriateness of education and training to obtain and retain employment;
- Achievement of training and / or employment goals;
- Reduced duration of unemployment period; and
- Services needed versus services available.

The proposed measuring instruments / methods are:

- Customer satisfaction surveys;
- Customer focus groups;
- Management Information System data;
- Customer follow-up data; and
- Customer services records / files.

Note that not all the above can be quantified through technology. Some of the measures are more qualitative, yet are important to determining "success."

Reframing the Critical Success Factors

Based on the research, a reframing of the original critical success factors and indicators incorporates the key learnings across the varied models and sites.

Critical Success Factor 4: Satisfying Job Seekers

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- **Measure satisfaction with the center as a whole** rather than only by program.
- **Examine variations in satisfaction among *types* of customers** to determine its effectiveness and appeal to dislocated workers, welfare mothers, youth, professionals, immigrants, etc. to better customize its services and marketing efforts.
- **Measure process as well as outcomes**. The center measures the satisfaction of customers with individual processes (intake, counseling, etc.) rather than just outcomes so corrective action can be targeted appropriately.
- **Seek input from job seekers about critical features** that determine their overall satisfaction level with the center, so the center can measure the appropriate indicators.
- **Compare customer satisfaction level.** The center compares its level of customer satisfaction with that of other service entities in the community.

Critical Success Factor 5: Managing Job Seeker Services

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- **Establish a professional appearance** that will be attractive to customers.

- **Expedite customer flow.** The center makes it easy for customers to find and obtain the services they seek. If unemployment claims are taken in the center, the design avoids that function dominating the appearance of the center and the customer flow.
- **Manage peak loads.** The center ensures there are contingency plans for providing good service when large customer volumes occur.
- **Avoid creating barriers.** The center avoids the use of waiting chairs, number pulls, or lines. All customers are engaged in activity.
- **Measure its results.** The center (and the workforce board) operates with center wide measures. A data system exists that permits timely access to information by all who need it.
- **Modify services and delivery strategies based on market needs and customer demands.** The center is agile in its responsiveness to new needs and opportunities. The center brings in new services when customers would value them. The center has a culture of embracing continuous improvement.

Critical Success Factor 6: Delivering Quality Services to Job Seekers

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- **Make the resource room the focal point of the center.** It is visible upon entry and easily accessed and used by customers. Customers can obtain staff help quickly when they need it. The room is large enough, designed for customer comfort, and equipped with both up to date computers and materials. Resources are freely accessible and do not require staff intervention to log onto a computer, read a book or periodical, or sign up for a class.
- **Provide customers with comprehensive access to training and education services.** The center maximizes the training services that are accessible to customers through partnerships with education institutions and training providers. It maintains up to date databases about course availability, cost, and location. Staff use this information in advising customers.
- **Obtain additional resources to meet customer needs.** The center goes beyond base funding to acquire resources needed to deliver services that are important to its customers.

Services to Job Seekers – Site Summary

The following chart aggregates the mix of practice found across the sites studied. The appendices contain more detailed matrices that include site-by-site answers.

Satisfying Job Seekers	
Documented increase in customer satisfaction	1 Yes 1 No 3 In process 8 Unknown/ unavailable 1 Consistently High
Differentiates satisfaction among customer types	11 No 3 Unknown
Measures satisfaction by center, not by program	10 Yes 1 No 1 Both 2 Measures satisfaction based on services, not programs or center
Uses a variety of customer satisfaction measures and tools	12 Yes 2 No Tools reported: 11 Paper surveys 4 Phone surveys 4 Interviews 4 Mystery shoppers 3 Focus groups 2 Unknown
Measures sample of customers or all	4 Sample 3 All 3 All, time sampling 4 Varies
Seeks customer input on measures	9 Yes 5 No
There is evidence of image change	10 Yes 3 Unknown 1 Other
Satisfaction strategy	6 Yes 2 Customer focused/ relationship building 2 Employer-first focus. 1 In process 3 Unknown
Documented increase in new and repeat customers	3 Yes 3 No 2 Operator must meet workforce board specified annual numbers 6 Unknown/ unavailable
Documented increase in "level" of customer (education and experience)	5 Yes 3 No 6 Unknown/ unavailable

Appearance/Image of Center:	Greeter Not Behind Desk: 8 Y, 3 N, 1 U, 1 V, 1 No greeter Common Reception Point: 12 Y, 1N, 2 U Space for Group Services: 12 Y, 2 U, 1 V Clearly Posts Hours of Operation: 11 Y, 2 U, 1 V Expanded Hours: 10 Y, 3 N, 1 V Signage/ Brand Name: 9 Y, 2 N, 1 U, 2 V Clear Internal Signage: 13 Y, 1 U Staff Wear Name Tags: 10 Y, 2 N, 2 U Menu of Services Displayed: 9 Y, 2 N, 2 U, 1 V Vision/ Mission Displayed: 6 Y, 4 N, 3 U, 1 V KEY: Y=Yes, N=No, U=Unknown/ Unavailable, V=Varies
Managing Job Seeker Services	
Management Model: positioning of job seeker services	5 Strong emphasis/ focus of center 5 Self-serve employment services are "front door" 3 Staff greet and direct job seekers 1 Emphasis on providing multiple points access points into system
Customer Flow	7 No lines or waiting chairs 3 "Well designed" 1 Business service model drives flow 1 Flow managed as part of customer service model 1 Waiting lines and seating area present
Scope of services	All offered a wide variety of services, see Appendix C for specific details.
Serving Universal Population: Evidence of change in customer base	8 Yes 2 No 4 Unknown/ Unavailable
Post employment services	3 Customer Satisfaction work 1 No specific services, but employed individuals come to center to utilize existing services 1 Variety of services offered, both for retention and skill building 1 None apparent 7 Unknown
Managing Quality: Written strategy for building customer relationships	3 Yes 3 No 2 Using marketing as a strategy for building relationships 1 Performance objectives only 1 Customer service training provided to all, did not see specific written strategy on building customer relationships 1 In process 3 Unknown
Data sharing Across Partners	4 Yes 7 Limited/ some 3 Unknown
Delivering Services to Job Seekers	
Resource center is focal point	11 Yes 3 Off to one side, but still a focal point
Self-help services readily available	14 Yes
Computers available	14 Yes. Where reported, number varied from 3-22.
Web-based services	All offer at least some services.

Management of website	7 Local 5 State 2 Both State and Local
Average number of job seekers per month	5 At least 500 7 At least 1000 1 Unknown/ unavailable
Staff stationed full time in the resource area	13 Yes 1 No
Information available in wide array of media	13 Yes 1 Primarily print media
Customers have access to telephone, fax, photocopier, printer, internet	All provided access.
Resume preparation	10 Yes 4 Self help and staff assisted.
Skill Assessment	13 Yes 1 No
Aptitude Testing	14 Yes
Career/Interest assessment	14 Yes
Job Search Skill Training	12 Yes 2 No
On-Site Education or skill training (ABE/GED, literacy, computer classes)	10 Yes 3 No 1 Training provided by other organizations located in the same building on different floors
Fee-based services	7 Yes 7 No
Service Recovery Strategy	6 Yes 4 No 4 Unknown
Job Matching System	All offered. System Used (where specified): 3 State 1 Local 3 State and local
Measuring Success	
Performance measures across the system	8 Yes 4 No 1 In process 1 Program based measures only, but Workforce Board is focused on overall system
State or local Workforce Board developed measures/standards	5 Yes 2 No 2 Local 3 Both state and local 2 Unknown
Center uses “indicators” to determine if it is on track to meet outcomes	12 Yes 2 No
Center measures staff satisfaction	8 Yes 4 No 2 Unknown

One-Stop Center Design And Management

Defining Critical Success Factors for Design and Management

The final category of critical success factors studied was how the design and management choices made in one-stop centers impact their success. The study team developed the following potential critical success factors to examine regarding design and management choices, along with some of the possible indicators about those factors.

Potential Critical Success Factors and Indicators Used to Organize the Study

Governance/Leadership

- State role in policy and operations;
- Local Workforce Board role in leadership;
- Decision-making process defined among partners;
- Common goal and vision building among partners;
- Communication facilitated among partners;
- Partners taking a joint venture approach;
- Defined process for bringing new partners into the one-stop; and
- Establishment of relationships between comprehensive and affiliate centers.

Management

- Operator is competitively procured;
- Operator entity is a consortium;
- Center has a single manager/coordinator with described authorities for managing the center;
- Center manager/coordinator is funded by more than one funding source;
- Clarity about to whom the center manager is accountable;
- Center has a business plan;
- Programs are integrated, not just co-located;
- Cost sharing across agencies exists;
- Common culture is fostered among partners;
- Partners can identify levers that accelerate change;
- Cross training, career paths, and development of common skills among staff is done jointly by all partners;
- Staffing; and
- Revenue generation strategies/role of fee-for-service.

Measurement

- One-stop measures versus program measures;

- Measuring success of one-stops; and
- Creating and using shared databases.

Marketing

- Center has a brand identity that's well known; and
- Clarity about market and product niches on which it is focusing.

Governance and Leadership: State Role

As the study teams visited one-stop centers in seven states with widely differing political leadership and policy environments, a topic of particular interest was whether the approach and level of commitment by the state significantly impacted the development of the centers. Each community's workforce board and one-stop center leadership could identify situations where the state had either been a help or a hindrance. But it was striking to find no evidence that the policy and operational choices made by state agencies had been pivotal in one-stop center development. The strength and constancy of local leadership about one-stop centers appears to be far more crucial in their development.

Having said that, it was abundantly clear that the type and level of engagement by the state can either accelerate innovation significantly or slow it down. Across the seven states, we found three models of the approach being taken by states to steer one-stop center development and improvement.

Model 1: Micromanagement

Some states have attempted to manage one-stop center development very centrally, issuing mandates and directives from the state capitol. The logic of this approach is one of command and control. If the one-stop system is tightly managed from the state level it is far easier to ensure consistency of quality at all locations. Also, state agency partners in many places live within departments or commissions that manage through directives and seek relative uniformity of offices and of service delivery.

In reality, what results most often under this approach is mediocrity. Micromanagement suppresses risk taking and entrepreneurial behavior. States that try to ensure quality centers by voluminous policy and oversight generally wind up ensuring that although no center is dreadful, no center has the freedom to excel.

Model 2: Leaving a Policy Vacuum

The study teams visited multiple states in which workforce development in general and one-stop centers in particular are not a high priority for the Governor. What has happened in those states typically has been the growth of policy vacuums, in which local workforce boards and one-stop operators rarely receive direction or guidance from the state.

What occurs when the state leaves a vacuum is that the quality of the development of one-stop centers is then almost entirely locally determined. In that environment, those with a strong local vision of what they're operating may do very well in their one-stop centers while those without that vision are much less likely to innovate. Over time these states end up with a bipolar distribution: excellent centers and poor centers with no basis for consistency. However, the policy vacuum also means that some centers will excel far beyond what any state entity could have envisioned. Successful centers are those that respond to their uniquely local needs, and states generally can't craft policy that contemplates and accommodates all local conditions.

Model 3: Clear State Policy with Local Flexibility

The middle ground for state policy between the two extremes just discussed is a strong state-local partnership. In these situations, states set a broad but clear sense of direction for what is expected from one-stop centers and the workforce boards overseeing the centers. For example, in one of the states studied, the State Workforce Board outlined its basic direction for one-stop centers through a series of vision elements. The state workforce board then turned to the local workforce boards to define locally relevant measures and priorities. This approach led to a very rich and open period of innovation as the local workforce boards in many parts of this state allowed and encouraged the one-stop partners to innovate.

This is a condition that is not often found, but when it is, one-stop centers tend to develop faster and with greater innovation.

Governance and Leadership: Local Role

The strongest critical success factor repeated at nearly every site visited by the study teams was local leadership. There is no substitute for strong leadership in one-stop centers that are growing and thriving. In several cases the research teams could identify a key person or group who kept the center moving ahead when barriers arose and kept enthusiasm up over time. Typically, that leadership has two components – a small number of extraordinary leaders around whom others rally and a team of such leaders who share a consistent vision and have built long-term relationships. They describe themselves as friends away from work, and as people who've worked together successfully for many years.

The other key is that the leadership is local. Thriving centers are firmly grounded in the needs and politics of the community in which they operate. This approach requires champions from within the community.

Local Workforce Boards: Crucial Leadership Role

The researchers visited a number of sites in which it was extremely clear that the local workforce board was playing a pivotal role in defining center expectations and accountability, encouraging continuous improvement, and acting as external champions for the one-stop centers. Major levers used by Local Workforce Boards include:

- **Chartering –** Several of the Local Workforce Boards involved in this study charter each center, often based upon a quality-based framework, such as the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria. Typically, those boards use chartering to make very clear what they consider crucial for quality one-stop centers. In some instances, the center is not allowed to operate without a local workforce board charter. Typically, this process was seen as a very positive tool, allowing the Local Workforce Board and the One-Stop Operators to come to a mutual agreement about what represents high quality services and results and the path to be taken to reach that shared goal. Some of the Local Workforce Boards involved spent time in serious conflict with operators until agreement on improvements could be reached.

- **Business Plans –** Many of the Local Workforce Boards studied require centers to prepare business plans at startup and to then revise those plans every 1-3 years. Those boards and centers generally found the tool a very positive and helpful one. The one-stop center partners usually develop the business plan collaboratively. The tool steers them toward thinking about the markets for services, operational requirements and management issues for the entire center, not just for their own agency and programs.
- **Center liaison within the Board's staff –** Someone from the Board's staff plays a consistent and regular role in working with the one-stop center operators. At some locations, that appears to be a key element of successful board-center relationships; the staff person facilitates communication and keeps the board's expectations in view on a regular basis. The balancing act is for the board staff involved to stay at the oversight level and to avoid plunging into trying to directly manage the center.
- **Competitively procuring one-stop operators –** Another tool being used by some of the boards studied is the competitive procurement of center operators. Several examples were seen of this approach being used to stimulate new partnerships and fresh approaches to service delivery.
- **Workforce Board as external champion --** At the same time, some of the same Local Workforce Boards also became strong external champions of the one-stop centers; encouraging their use and helping them acquire funding along the way. These boards encourage and sponsor innovation by operators.

One-Stop Operators and Partners: Crucial Leadership Roles

A sure sign of a solid center is evidence of a true joint venture among the organizations partnering to operate it. At several sites, the study teams found long-standing and deep relationships among the partners, including a strong commitment to a meaningful joint venture. Those partners make key decisions together, such as budgets, selection of center managers, staffing mix and levels, and service strategies. As a result, when sticky issues arise, the partners have a basis for working them through successfully.

Partnerships with this level of trust and commitment are the best candidates for truly integrated delivery of services. In several of the sites studied, the strength of the joint venture commitment among two or more key partners was the dominant factor in the success of the center's development. Elements of joint venture strength that were observed include:

- **Strong, articulated shared vision and commitment to the joint venture –** At sites with strong partnerships, agency leaders could easily describe the mutual commitments among the partners and the shared vision of excellence for which they jointly are striving. Interestingly, these partners often used their own tools to document their agreements and didn't find federally-mandated memoranda of understanding to be particularly helpful.
- **Sharing costs –** Cross-partner sharing of common costs appears to be an accelerator in developing strong one-stop centers through a joint venture. At one site visited, shared costs include the salary of the center manager, along with expenses for staff development and marketing, as well as administrative expenses.
- **Regular leadership team meetings –** A crucial tool for maintaining momentum is the consistency of the partner organizations' senior leaders meeting and making strategic decisions. Without that steady nurturing of the joint venture, centers have found it

perilously easy for the partners to each be pulled back into their own organization's needs and culture and losing sight of the needs and culture of the one-stop center.

- **Site selection –** Researchers witnessed a consistent pattern about the development of centers that had the advantage of starting in a new location – a site that is neutral of pre-existing agency identity – versus those formed in the offices of a single partner. Invariably, the neutral site locations advanced much faster. First, partnerships formed over negotiating the service strategy, staffing, funding, design and location of the new site. That forced them to go into greater depth of relationship and joint venturing than would otherwise have been required. Second, the neutral site centers weren't forced to undo years of public identity in the site's former life. Third, staff paradigms shifted much faster in neutral sites, where no one could assume a context without change. By contrast, the host agency staff in a pre-existing site come with a culture that is often hard to transition into a new, shared environment.
- **Developing and implementing a comprehensive strategy for locations –** Several of the sites visited are working with well-conceived strategies for ensuring close availability of services to customers. They employ a mix of a limited number of comprehensive centers with a broad array of services in combination with a larger number of affiliated mini-centers that connect various niches of customers to their regional one-stop system. Mini-centers may be neighborhood based, or aimed at a particular segment of customers, such as businesses in an industrial park.
- **Site design –** Several of the locations visited have put a great deal of thought and investment into the layout and furnishings of the center. Leaders at those sites point to various design choices made as greatly helping with center image and customer perceptions and flows.
- **Involving employee unions –** At sites involving union-represented employees, involving the union in the design appears to be vital. One location visited has employees from both county and state unions working together. Center leadership met regularly with union leadership during the design phase to develop commitment to the vision and to work through clarifications of what changes were possible within collective bargaining agreements. In a number of instances, perceived barriers to integrated services turned out to be matters of interpretation and not of contract language and were possible to overcome.

Management

Another key dimension of one-stop center design is the management structure selected and how that is then implemented. First, the centers studied all have managers. Researchers could readily identify who they are and how they are positioned. Some of the sites visited have integrated management teams, in which front-line managers from among the partner agencies lead the various functions of the center.

Other management issues that contribute to one-stop center success include staffing, staff development, continuous improvement activities, and technology deployment.

Center Managers

The sites visited chose managers in a variety of manners. For several, the manager from the hosting partner assumed that role. In others, there is a lead organization among the operators who provides the manager. Others are using management teams to lead the center.

Without question, the most powerful model seen is when the partners employ a full time center manager with no other duties. That manager becomes someone constantly focused on the growth, culture and success of the center as an enterprise, and isn't being forced to juggle that with managing the detail of individual programs. One model observed has the center manager jointly selected and funded by the partners. The position was posted and advertised, and was open to anyone interested, whether currently working for a partner agency or not. That site found the selected managers gained neutrality of focus and legitimacy as speaking for the center at all times with no confusion about whether individual partner agendas were behind the manager's actions or comments.

Staff Selection and Development

At some of the sites visited, a process for selecting the staff that would work in the center was employed, rather than agencies simply assigning the staff to work there. The advantage that was identified was that closer attention was paid from the outset as to the expectations of working in the one-stop center and whether that was a good fit for the potential staff member. This model could not be employed in many instances because of pre-existing partner staff members who needed to be transitioned into the new centers. In the latter cases, partners often put a lot of work into resolving issues with staff that fail to buy into the culture and direction of the one-stop center.

Staff development is a key one-stop center improvement strategy, particularly when done across partners and not within the parent agencies. Many of the centers studied do forms of cross-training, customer service training, development of specific skills needed, and team building.

Continuous Quality Improvement

Many of the centers studied have used continuous improvement strategies and tools to great advantage in their development. Often, a significant investment was made at the outset to ensure the center's management and staff developed strong command of the possible methodologies. Many centers have developed and are implementing a continuous improvement plan, making excellent use of customer feedback and staff ideas to adjust service delivery quickly and effectively.

Technology

Effective investment in and deployment of technology is an important element in building strong one-stop centers. A wide variation of success at this was witnessed among the sites visited. Those that perceive they have strong technological tools credit the automation with greatly assisting their ability to deliver top quality services. The study found a mix of state-managed systems and locally-managed systems. Overall, this topic was one of great frustration at many sites because of their belief that they lack the right tools to manage services effectively.

Measurement

One of the crucial things learned during the study was that none of the sites examined have implemented center wide or system measures that are meaningful, beyond some basic customer satisfaction measures. Even centers that have been in operation at a high level for 15 years list this as a good idea that they haven't been able to put into practice. The lack of integrated databases across agencies, the lack of common definitions, and the national struggles at defining common measures have vexed these sites just as much as many others nationwide.

This doesn't mean the sites don't believe that effective measurement is not a critical success factor. Rather, it more strongly reflects their lack of data tools and lack of agreement as to what constitutes meaningful measures on a center wide level. At a few of the sites, some promising work is beginning between the Workforce Board and the One-Stop Operator to develop a simple set of key measures that could be tracked and used. This is an element likely to accelerate during the near future.

Marketing

The quality of the branding of the centers varied widely. The research team did find a few locations in which strong brands have been developed and are embraced widely. Those brands are punchy and well-known, and have become a major asset in attracting customers. If these are statewide brands, they have worked because of two factors: a strong state-local partnership in deciding the brand and its protocols, and a significant investment in brand building that is sustained over time.

One crucial point to consider about building a new identity for one-stop centers. When customers sample services at the center after being attracted, they need to encounter high quality if the brand is to be helpful. One private sector workforce board member within the study team noted that when his company acquires another one it takes two-three years to phase the acquired facilities into the culture of his firm. The acquiring firm's name is not used on the acquired facilities until that transition is completed. Some workforce boards use their chartering processes to be the brand protection: no charter, no use of the brand.

Reframing the Critical Success Factors

Based on the research, a reframing of the original critical success factors and indicators incorporates the key learnings across the varied models and sites.

Critical Success Factor 7: Leadership

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- **Have Strong Workforce Board Leadership**. The Workforce Board provides clear direction for the center and encourages its development, using tools such as chartering, business plans, and competitive procurement.
- **Have One-Stop Operator Leadership**. The one-stop partnership is a joint venture, with shared costs, common vision and joint decision-making. The leadership team demonstrates an ongoing commitment to the joint venture, including meeting regularly and making strategic decisions when required.

Critical Success Factor 8: Management

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- **Have a neutral center manager**. The one-stop center has a manager totally dedicated to that role. That manager is jointly selected by the partners and accountable to the partnership as opposed to just one agency.
- **Provide staff development.** The center has a well-conceived and executed strategy for building the staff skills and culture needed for success.
- **Manage continuous quality improvement.** The center has a clear and implemented strategy for managing for ongoing improvement, including making effective use of customer feedback.
- **Use technology effectively**. The center has strong technological supports for its work. It has a credible plan for the advancement of that technology**.**

Critical Success Factor 9: Measurement

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- **Use center wide measures.** The workforce board and the one-stop operators use center-level measures rather than program-based measures for assessing center results.
- **Operate using integrated information systems.** The center has a means to acquire needed measurement information in a timely manner across the partners' programs.

Critical Success Factor 10: Marketing

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- **Build clear brand identity.** The one-stop center has a well-known, identifiable identity. It has a credible strategy for building one.
- **Identify service niches.** The one-stop center leadership and management are clear on customer and service niches that they are best positioned to support.

One-Stop Design and Management – Site Summary

The following chart aggregates the mix of practice found across the sites studied. The appendices contain more detailed matrices that include site-by-site answers.

Governance/Leadership	
State level entity role in policy and operations	5 Minimal 4 State provides broad policy direction, leaves Board and Operator lots of flexibility in application 3 Strong State/local relationship 2 Strong initially, but limited in recent years
Local Workforce Board role in leadership	7 Strong/ very strong 4 Board chartering required to operate Center 2 Workforce Board selects operators via competitive bid 1 Regional council has responsibility for creating workforce services plan for region
Decision-making process defined among partners	11 Yes 2 No 1 Varies by site
Common goal and vision building	12 Yes 1 No 1 Varies by site
Communication facilitated among partners	11 Yes 1 No 2 Minimal
Joint venture approach	8 Yes 4 No 2 Friendly, but driven by lead partner
There is a defined process for bringing new partners into the one-stop	6 Yes 4 No 1 Varies by site 3 Unknown
Comprehensive vs affiliate relationships	9 Comprehensive Only 5 Comprehensive/affiliate site mix If affiliates: 3 Operator runs affiliate sites 2 Neighborhood groups operate
Management	
Operator was competitively procured	7 Yes 7 No
Operator entity is a consortium	7 Yes 7 No
Center has a single manager/coordinator with described authorities for managing the center	9 Yes 5 No
Center manager/coordinator is funded by more than one funding source	9 Yes 2 No 1 Varies by site 1 NA 1 Unknown

Center manager is accountable to…	4 Workforce Board 2 State agency 5 Operator Consortium 1 Community College President 1 Partnership and Board Director 1 NA
Center has a business plan	11 Yes 3 No
Programs are integrated, not just co-located	7 Yes 4 No 3 Most are integrated
Cost sharing across agencies	8 Yes 4 No 2 Unknown
Common culture is fostered among partners	11 Yes 2 No 1 Varies by site
Levers that accelerate change	3 Workforce Board 2 Strong emphasis on employer services 2 Dynamic individuals, not documented strategy 1 Formalized training 1 Being opportunistic 1 Meeting with partners early in process 1 Trust among partners 2 Unknown
Cross training, career paths, development of common skills among staff of all partners	11 Yes 1 No 2 Unknown
Staffing	See Appendix for details.
Revenue Strategies/role of fee for service	6 Key activity/ committed to developing 5 Fees not planned/ discouraged 3 Minimal role
Measurement	
One-stop measures vs program measures	6 Both 5 Program only beyond customer satisfaction 2 Program only 1 Program only, but workforce board is focused on overall system
Measuring success of one-stops	6 Customer satisfaction 2 Increased volume 2 Workforce Investment Act measures 2 Chartering Criteria 1 Successful referrals 1 Web site/ resource room usage 3 Unknown
Shared databases	5 No 3 Yes 3 Same 1 Using State system 2 Unknown

Marketing	
Brand identity	12 Yes 1 Marketing includes information about all partners 1 Does not do much marketing, already at full capacity For those with a brand identity: 5 Statewide brand 7 Local brand
Product/market niche	2 Customer Service 2 Community Focus 1 Individual centers known for certain services 1 Serve a range of job seekers and employers 1 Consultant to business 1 Information brokers 1 Excellence in job matching 2 Working on developing marketing strategy/ niche 2 Unknown

Conclusions

Key Learnings

Leadership matters

- **Local Leadership is crucial to one-stop center success.**

  As the study team looked at what factors held across sites, regardless of context, it was the existence of identifiable leadership from within the community that was strong, visionary and constant over time.

- **Local Workforce Boards can play a pivotal role in one-stop center quality.**

  Local Workforce Boards play an active role in setting standards, encouraging one-stop center development, and then holding centers accountable at many of the sites studied. Those interviewed pointed to the Workforce Board's role as vital in many instances to the quality of their centers. Chartering and requiring business plans are the two most frequently cited tools that Workforce Boards are successfully using to guide centers.

- **Local Elected Officials can also play a vital role in one-stop center success.**

  The engagement of mayors, county commissioners and other local elected officials can be an essential link in forging a first-rate one-stop center. The study teams visited sites where the commitment of the elected officials took various forms: help in acquiring facilities, assistance with finding discretionary funding, and support for non-traditional approaches to service. Some of the greatest champions of one-stop centers the study teams found were local elected officials who saw the opportunity presented and engaged in taking advantage of it.

- **One-Stop Operators and Partners provide solid leadership at high quality centers.**

  One of the axioms of continuous quality improvement ventures is that little meaningful will occur without a strong commitment by senior management. One-Stop Centers illustrate the point. At many of the centers studied the organizations involved have formed joint ventures, in which they have committed to a common vision, joint decision-making on strategic issues, sharing of costs, center wide management and integration of services.

- **States can Accelerate – or Slow Down – Innovation.**

  The researchers studied centers in widely varying state policy and program management environments. What became clear is that where states play a strong but thoughtful role in encouraging one-stop center development, the support helps local operators improve their centers much more rapidly. The optimum model cited and demonstrated involved the state setting a clear policy framework and leaving details of implementation to the Local Workforce Boards and One-Stop partners. A positive state leadership role often includes engaging various departments to commit to working as part of the one-stop centers and system, and providing local managers with authority to jointly make key decisions with their partners.

Management matters

- **Center Managers responsible for the full operation provide crucial direction.**

  Sites that have full time, dedicated center managers or coordinators, responsible only for the growth and development of the one-stop center, gain a sense of direction, culture and focus lacking in those without that asset. A "mall manager" concept in which the manager only coordinates separate partners within a real estate setting does not appear to have nearly the impact that a stronger manager has. One of the sites studied jointly funds and hires the center managers; all involved thought that decision had been pivotal in the advancement of their centers.

- **Well-managed centers engage front-line staff in center design and decision-making.**

  Centers that are seeking excellence manage by engaging the entire staff in decision-making, from the design phase through service delivery. One of the keys to effective service is the ability of a staff person to, in most cases, resolve a customer's issue without being required to seek approval from a superior.

- **Investments in management tools are essential.**

  Developing one-stop centers is slow, hard work. Centers that invest in staff development, technology and continuous quality improvement processes find they gain a solid return on that investment in terms of the quality of service delivery and building of center culture.

Site decisions can help set the environment for success

- **Neutral sites become stars faster than old agency offices do.**

  Researchers witnessed a consistent pattern about the development of centers that had the advantage of starting in a new location – a site that is neutral of pre-existing agency identity – versus those formed in the offices of a single partner. Invariably, the neutral site locations advanced much faster. First, partnerships formed over negotiating the service strategy, staffing, funding, design and location of the new site. Second, the neutral site centers weren't forced to undo years of public identity in the site's former life. Third, staff paradigms shifted much faster in neutral sites, where no one could assume a context without change.

- **Staffed, quality resource rooms are centerpieces in thriving centers.**

  It was unmistakable to the researchers that excellent resource rooms are a mandatory element of a first-rate one-stop center. The pattern is clear: the resource room is the first thing the customer sees. They are typically located either along a front wall or at the center of the site. They look professional, and have comfortable furnishings. They are designed for ease of customer use. They have ample computers and materials for customers to use. Most important, they are staffed by counselors, case managers, and other staff who can answer customer questions, assist their information searches and decision processes, and connect them to services. In a medium to large center, the team typically saw two or more staff working in the resource room at any time.

- **Center design flexibility is enhanced if unemployment compensation benefits are not managed on site.**

  Another stark contrast is between centers operating with on-site filing for unemployment benefits and those in states where claimants file either by telephone or the internet. The researchers saw several cases in which the shift of benefits management provoked a reinvention of the one-stop centers. Typically, centers without unemployment claims have much larger resource rooms, more meeting and training spaces, and a much more inviting customer flow, since a key need for waiting queues and counters vanishes. This change shifts the focus of one-stop centers from benefits to being fully on employment and education issues.

Employer Services are reinvented

- **Centers enhance employer services by creating unified teams of account representatives.**

  At the centers studied that have made employer services a top priority, all have chosen some form of unified contact management system, with dedicated employer account representatives – often cutting across agency lines. Those account representatives manage some combination of geographic and industry territory, and use common databases to keep track of their work.

- **Centers need to strategically decide on which employers to focus their attention.**

  One breakthrough point observed by some of the centers with strong employer service teams was a realization that they needed a carefully thought through strategy about employers on which to concentrate. No one-stop center can serve everyone well, just because of resource limitations. What some have realized is focusing on economic development targeted industries or on other strategically selected firms may result in greater impact.

Creating a market identity is hard but matters

- **Brand building requires time and resources.**

  The sites visited that have established greater market identity have done so with a substantial investment of resources over time, including advertising. The strongest brands are found in states in which a common statewide brand is used that was developed by and is embraced by both state and local leaders.

- **Ensuring the new identity is associated with quality is essential.**

  Effort and money expended on building a new brand identity will be wasted if customers who visit the one-stop centers perceive them to not provide a quality experience. States, workforce boards and one-stop operators all need to work diligently to ensure the new brand is only used where it reflects quality. Some workforce boards tie the authority to use the brand to approval of the center’s charter.

One-Stop Center measurement is just beginning

- **Center wide measures are just now being created.**

  None of the centers visited by the research team has implemented center wide measurement systems that diverge from program performance measures. Several of the workforce boards studied are in the process of establishing their frameworks for measurement, which appear to be heading toward using a few key indicators of performance through tools such as balanced scorecards.

Revised Critical Success Factors

The following summarizes the revised critical success factors proposed throughout this report. The intent of presenting these factors is to offer workforce boards and one-stop operators a solid starting point in determining which matter in their community context.

Critical Success Factors for Employer Services

Critical Success Factor 1: Satisfying Employers

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- Measure at center level, not program level;
- Measure satisfaction both with processes and outcomes;
- Disaggregate satisfaction data;
- Consult with employers about the critical success factors for the one-stop center; and
- Use customer behavior as an indicator of satisfaction.

Critical Success Factor 2: Managing Employer Services

Indicators to consider –
Does the one-stop center:

- Make employer services a priority;
- Manage employer services as a unified activity;
- Maintain a database to track contacts, delivery of services, and outcomes;
- Build a quality team;
- Become knowledgeable about key industries;
- Define the one-stop center's market niche in the community;
- Establish one-on-one relationships with employers; and
- Use customer satisfaction trends to make changes.

Critical Success Factor 3: Delivering Quality Services to Employers

Indicators to consider –
Does the one-stop center:

- Operate with a "never say no" attitude;
- Work in "real time" with a sense of urgency;
- Develop fee-for-service activities to meet employer needs:
- View other public intermediaries as partners, not as competitors; and
- Design services based upon customer requirements.

Critical Success Factors for Job Seeker Services

Critical Success Factor 4: Satisfying Job Seekers

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- Measure satisfaction with the center as a whole;
- Examine variations in satisfaction among types of customers;
- Measure process as well as outcomes;
- Seek input from job seekers about critical features; and
- Compare the center’s customer satisfaction level with that of other operations.

Critical Success Factor 5: Managing Job Seeker Services

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- Establish a professional appearance;
- Expedite customer flow;
- Manage peak loads;
- Avoid creating barriers such as waiting chairs or lines;
- Measure its results; and
- Modify services and delivery strategies based on market needs and customer demands.

Critical Success Factor 6: Delivering Quality Services to Job Seekers

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- Make the resource room the focal point of the center;
- Provide customers with comprehensive access to training and education services; and
- Obtain additional resources to meet customer needs.

Critical Success Factors in Design and Management

Critical Success Factor 7: Leadership

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- Have strong Workforce Board leadership;
- Have One-Stop Operator leadership; and
- Have support of Local Elected Officials.

Critical Success Factor 8: Management

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- Have a neutral center manager;

- Provide staff development;
- Manage continuous quality improvement; and
- Utilize technology effectively.

Critical Success Factor 9: Measurement

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- Use center wide measures; and
- Support integrated information systems.

Critical Success Factor 10: Marketing

Indicators to consider -
Does the one-stop center:

- Build clear brand identity; and
- Identify and strategically pursue service niches.

On-Going Evaluation and Replication

The findings of the Benchmarking project will not have value unless they are applied at the local level – and applied periodically as part of a continuous improvement process. It was patently clear that the excellent one-stop operators and staff visited during this project never feel as though they have already done everything they can to serve customers. Despite the exemplary progress they have made, they are constantly engaged in assessing themselves against the market and the "best in class." Most participated in this project to help their own improvement, and were anxious for feedback from the research teams about what the visitors saw that could be improved. It is that kind of spirit and commitment that creates world-class one-stops.

Workforce Investment Boards must also be actively involved. The Board cannot interpret its oversight role as only a monitoring function. A superior board promotes quality in services through:

- Crafting a vision of excellence, and involving the community in the vision.
- Maintaining an on-going dialogue with the one-stop operator about quality, not just about numbers and outcomes.
- Providing technical assistance to the operator in business planning, team development, and enhancing partnerships.
- Supporting innovation for learning, not just end results.
- Using the Critical Success Factors assessment as a review tool.

Process Steps

What follows is a process that could be used by workforce boards and one-stop operators to engage in employing the findings of this study to assess strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement. This process can serve as the basis for center chartering by the workforce board.

1. Vision

The Workforce Board convenes key members of the community to develop a vision for one-stop excellence customized to their community. The Critical Success Factors self-assessment tool should be used as the baseline to define the criteria for "meeting" a factor. The Critical Success Factors will remain the same; but the specific criteria for determining whether a factor is met may vary. The end product will be a customized self-assessment tool.

2. Self-Assessment

The one-stop operator completes the self-assessment tool and submits it to the workforce board along with background documents, including:

- Floor plan
- Organizational chart
- Customer flow chart
- Memoranda of Understanding

- Marketing materials
- Most recent full year's performance outcomes and most current performance to-date
- Business plan for the center, strategic plan, if any
- Most recent minutes of any internal workgroups or committees
- Customer satisfaction survey tools

3. On-site Assessment Protocol

The workforce board should designate a committee of non-conflicted members to review the self-assessment and perform the on-site review. A suggested protocol for that review includes:

- Meet the one-stop management team and contractor / board members;
- Identify individual and group expectations and assumptions about the evaluation;
- Briefly tour facility to gain a sense of the basic layout and general flow of activity. Observe customers actions, how often they are idle, the relative age and gender ranges, body language, opportunities to interact with staff, etc.;
- Simulate an experience as a job seeker customer and as an employer customer. Make staff aware this is a simulated experience, but to act as they normally would. Remind them that this is to educate you, not to personally critique them. Create a "persona" for yourself as a customer. Make note of time for each step, paperwork that must be completed (collect copies of each) and handouts. Ask questions and query staff people throughout.
- Use management's completed self assessment to talk through their processes and gain understanding of their future intent.

4. Complete the Critical Success Factors Report Card

Based on the self-assessment, supporting documents, and on-site observation and discussion, the workforce board completes the CSF Report Card and discusses the results with the one-stop operator.

5. Development of Action Plan

Operator management develops action plan to design and implement improvements.

6. Repeat Benchmark Cycle

Boards share report cards and identify one-stops that rate "excellent" on factors most important to their own system development. Each board creates a team of members and operator management to make on-site visits to those one-stops.